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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/842,573	04/25/2001	Naoto Arai	10873.706US01	7468
7590	01/20/2004		EXAMINER	
MERCHANT & GOULD P.C. P.O. Box 2903 Minneapolis, MN 55402-0903			WILLS, MONIQUE M	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1746	

DATE MAILED: 01/20/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/842,573	ARAI ET AL.
Examiner	Art Unit	
Wills M Monique	1746	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 03 November 2003.
- 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-6,9 and 10 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-6 & 9-10 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on 4/25/01 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application) since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.
a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121 since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____.
- 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____.
- 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

This office action is responsive to the amendment filed November 3, 2003.

Claims 7,8 and 11-18 have been cancelled by applicant. Claims 1-6, 9 and 10 remain rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Shimakawa et al. U.S. Patent 5,663,008.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-6 and 9-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Shimakawa et al. U.S. Patent 5,663,008.

Shimakawa teaches a battery assembly that can be used as a mobile power source for an electric vehicle (col. 1, lines 50-55, claim 10). The battery assembly comprises a module battery including an accumulation of approximately 5 to 40 cells, or two or more module batteries. See column 2, lines 50-60 (addresses claims 1, 5-6).

The energy density of the battery assembly ranges from 67 to 63 Wh/kg (tables 1-4).

The cells in the battery module are electrically connected (col. 4, lines 20-40, claim 4). Furthermore, the working pressure of the safety valve is set between 0.2 MPa and 0.8 MPa (col. 9, lines 15-25, claim 3) with an environmental temperature of 20°C (col. 5, lines 65-68, claim 3). Battery assemblies comprising the same working pressure, number of cells, electrical connections and environmental temperature, will inherently have a charge equalization of 0.015g or less per Ah (claim 2) and battery capacity of 6.5 to 7.2 ah/**cell** (claim 9). Therefore, the instant claims are anticipated by Shimakawa.

Response to Arguments

Applicant asserts that Shimakawa is not anticipatory because it teaches plural cells of a battery module housed in individual containers, with each of the containers having a safety valve. In contrast, claim 1 requires that a battery module house a plurality of cells in a *single* container with a *single* safety valve. This argument is not persuasive. The assembly of Shimakawa teaches multiple single containers, wherein each container has a single safety valve and a plurality of cells. The open ended language of the claim does not preclude multiple containers. The transitional term “comprising”, which is synonymous with “including,” “containing,” or “characterized by,” is inclusive or open-ended and does not exclude additional, unrecited elements or method steps. See, e.g., Genentech, Inc. v. Chiron Corp., 112 F.3d 495,501, 42

USPQ2d 1608, 1613 (Fed. Cir. 1997) (“Comprising” is a term of art used in claim language which means that the named elements are essential, but other elements may be added and still form a construct within the scope of the claim.); Moleculon Research Corp. v. CBS, Inc., 793 F.2d 1261, 229 USPQ 805 (Fed. Cir. 1986); In re Baxter, 656 F.2d 679, 686, 210 USPQ 795, 803 (CCPA 1981); Ex parte Davis, 80USPQ 448, 450 (Bd. App. 1948) (“comprising” leaves “the claim open for the inclusion of unspecified ingredients even in major amounts”). Therefore, the reference is anticipatory as long as it teaches at least one container with a single safety valve and a plurality of cells.

Conclusions

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of

the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the Examiner should be directed to Monique Wills whose telephone number is (571) 272-1309. The Examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 8:30am to 5:00 pm.

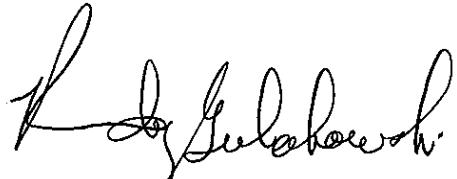
Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0661.

If attempts to reach Examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the Examiner's supervisor, Randy Gulakowski, may be reached at 571-272-1302.

The unofficial fax number is (703) 305-3599. The Official fax number for non-final amendments is 703-872-9310. The Official fax number for after final amendments is 703-872-9311.

Mw

1/05/04



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